

Indie Horror Films

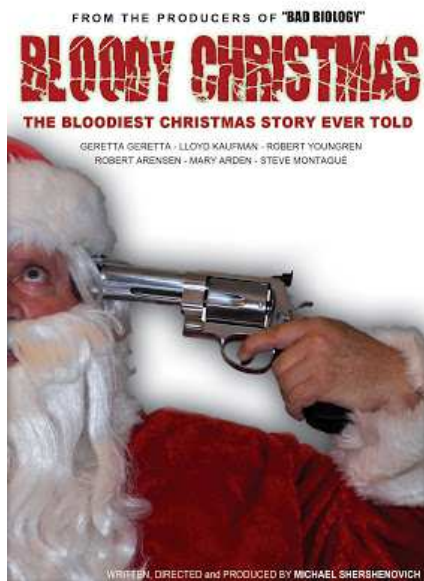
All genres of suspense, terror, and horror will be reviewed by Richard Gary. His address to send preview copies supplied upon request to rbf55@msn.com.

Tuesday, December 25, 2012

DVD Review: Bloody Christmas

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Bloody Christmas

Directed, produced and written by Michael Shershenovich

Planetworks

90 minutes, 2012

Planetworksent.com

[Facebook.com/BloodyChristmas](https://www.facebook.com/BloodyChristmas)

MVDvisual.com

Christmas horror is not a new genre. It arguably goes back to the kid-friendly likes of *Santa Claus Conquers the Martians* (1964), *The Christmas That Almost Wasn't* (1966) or even possibly *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (1966). However, it wasn't until the 1970s and into slasher craze of the '80s that we started to see *Tales from the Crypt* (1972; the "All Though the House" segment), *Black Christmas* (1974), *Silent Night, Bloody Night* (1974), *Christmas Evil* (1980), *To All a Good Night* (1980), *Silent Night, Deadly Night* (1984), *Santa Claws* (1996), and yes, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (2000). This is a new dip in the Christmas horror pool list, but does it get candy or coal in its dripping stocking?

The main theme of the film is the loss of Christmas spirit, and the result of it. A priest, Father Michael (Robert Youngren, who has played a lot of religious leaders in his career) laments that no one is coming to his church's Christmas service, including his staff. Rich Tague (Steve Montague, who ironically has played Hitler more than once, including a film called *Ultrachrist!* [2003]), the film's main focus, is a down-on-his-luck ex-action film actor who has just been fired as a store Santa (by a character played by the director), the check cashing place won't touch his last payment, and he's just received an eviction notice on his trailer for back rent. His anger and frustration slowly builds in him as we see flashes of his fantasies of killing those who offend him or his sensibilities.

Meanwhile, someone is killing people in the area of Binghamton, NY, including the son of Gaylen (Geretta Geretta, who looks a lot like Donna Summers; she was in the 1985 Lamberto Bava classic, *Demons*, which many feel had been remade as *[*]Rec* in 2007). Her first scene, which opens the film, is totally out of context and a waste. The police, led by the extremely underused Detective Steinman (Robert Arensen, who has practically made a career playing cops), believes it could be a serial killer.

The killer's identity is not really a surprise at all, but that's okay, all things considered, as this is a thriller, not a mystery, after all. The rough edge that runs throughout, though, is that first-time director Michael Shershenovich is still in the growing pains of filmmaking. For example, the digi-camera is nearly always handheld, making for some shaky viewing (though nowhere as bad as, say,

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Cloverfield). There are also some rough zooms and too many mid-close-ups, rather than alternating between full- and close shots. Also, he doesn't always get the best out of his actors. It's as though he rarely reshoots a scene, no matter how much the dialog gets trampled. But the most egregious sin is the total lack of pacing. For a slasher pic, it's slow and plodding, with very little action and too much pointless dialog that doesn't really add to the story. And don't get me started on the weak fight scene that is at the climax of the picture.

The gore level is pretty small and amateurish looking, with the exception of the last gunshot, which looked great. There is no sex, but a nice nude shower scene by the incredibly named (and built) Nova Lox. Like most of the rest of the younger women in the film, she has multiple ink and piercings.

Throughout the entire picture, there is a less-than-subtle pro-Christ in Christmas message, as characters comment about commercialism, the true meaning of the holiday, and the like. Yet characters have paper (Halloween) skeletons on the wall. It's a bit too all over the place.

Extras include interviews with some cast members, a couple of nothing deleted scenes, and a the film's trailers.

I don't believe Shershenovich should take this too much to heart, but use the experience and criticism to make better films. My suggestion is to take on a crew who is more experienced, and can help him along. The best way to learn is to do.

Posted by **Robert Barry Francos** at 12:01 AM

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